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House of Representatives

The House met at 12:30 p.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. CULBERSON).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC
June 17, 2002.

I hereby appoint the Honorable JOHN ABNEY CULBERSON to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

J. DENNIS HASTERT,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING HOUR DEBATES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 23, 2002, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning hour debates. The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to not to exceed 30 minutes, and each Member, except the majority leader, the minority leader, or the minority whip, limited to not to exceed 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. PENCE) for 5 minutes.

STATUS OF ANTHRAX INVESTIGATION

Mr. PENCE. Mr. Speaker, press accounts beginning in The Washington Post yesterday and on cable television networks over the past 24 hours have been resplendent with discussions about possible covert operations, the authorization of Special Forces by the President of the United States to confront the regime of Saddam Hussein in Iraq. While it might not surprise some Americans that Iraq may in some way have been involved in the events of 9-

11, Mr. Speaker, as I would like to elaborate, as I did so in a letter to the Attorney General last week, there is a growing list of facts that suggest Iraqi involvement not just in the events of 9-11, but perhaps, Mr. Speaker, even in the events and circumstances that led to the anthrax bacillus finding its way to Capitol Hill, costing the lives of five Americans, grinding much of the institutions of our Federal Government to a halt.

As Members may recall, Mr. Speaker, my office was one of three offices on the House of Representatives side of the Capitol building that tested positive for the anthrax bacillus in October. In addition to myself and my family and my staff and many constituent visitors to our office having to take a 3-month regimen of doxycycline and ciprofloxacin, also, as was the case in Senator DASCHLE's office and the Senate Hart Office Building, we were expelled from our offices for decontamination for a period of 4 months. It was, in addition to the loss of human life, an extraordinary disruption of our Federal Government as well as an occasion that truly terrorized the American people.

Since the time of the attacks, virtually within a week, the Federal Bureau of Investigation offered a theory of the case, Mr. Speaker, that could be described loosely as an American mad scientist, a version of the Unibomber, who had simply preyed upon this season of uncertainty following the 9-11 attacks and used anthrax materials that had been absconded from a U.S. weapons facility to further terrorize Americans. It seemed like a very plausible case, to say the least; but there is a growing list of facts that seem to suggest the possibility of an international connection to the anthrax attacks and even possibly, Mr. Speaker, to a connection to Bagdad.

Let me give some of those facts, which are uncontroverted allegations

that have appeared in various arms of the national press. These are 10 different facts that I articulated in a letter to Attorney General John Ashcroft asking, as I did last week, for some explanation as to why the FBI seems to have ruled out an international source for the terrorist attacks.

First and foremost, the letter to Senate Majority Leader TOM DASCHLE was actually dated September 11 and mailed, we believe, around that time, included phrases like "Death to America," "Death to Israel," and "Allah is great."

The evidence also suggests in media reports that one or more of the 9-11 terrorists visited physicians to be treated for skin lesions and infections that would be consistent with cutaneous exposure to anthrax.

Also the material found in my office and elsewhere on Capitol Hill was a finely milled weapons grade anthrax that had been genetically modified to increase its virulence. These are highly technical methods that can be employed by governments with the resources to do them.

This anthrax was also so powerful that not only had five people been killed, including two postal workers and two elderly women, but these deaths we believe occurred just through cross-contamination. This was a virulent strain developed to kill human beings.

Now, DNA evidence, which has been reported in the press, suggests that the anthrax that was found here in the Capitol was part of the Ames strain of anthrax, which we had developed at Fort Detrick, Maryland. But what you may not be aware of, Mr. Speaker, was that the Ames strain was actually sent to England's Porton Down research facility, and in that facility in 1988, according to many intelligence agency reports, Iraqi germ warfare scientists sought to obtain that very same Ames virus, and many believe that they did obtain the Ames virus.

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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So the anthrax bacillus with the genetic coding of the Ames strain could have been and may well have been obtained by Iraqi germ warfare scientists.

We also know that European government and CIA officials reported meetings between al Qaeda members and Iraqi intelligence officials before September 11, and the 9-11 terrorists also we know from confirmed accounts in the press, attempted to rent crop dusters, presumably as delivery vehicles, for chemical weapons.

Lastly, according to U.N. weapons inspector Richard Spertzel, Iraq has conducted military exercises to explore the possibility of disbursing anthrax using crop dusters.

These are all facts that suggest an international connection, perhaps even an Iraqi connection. This week I will urge the Justice Department and the administration to follow the facts wherever they lead.

PROVIDING ADEQUATE PRESCRIPTION DRUG COVERAGE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 23, 2002, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, earlier this month Congress made a choice. Republicans in this body passed legislation giving literally hundreds of billions in tax breaks, hundreds of billions of dollars, to the richest one-half of one percent of Americans, to decamillionaires and to billionaires. The choice that Congress made was between a tax cut for the richest, most privileged Americans, and an adequate, legitimate real prescription drug benefit for America's seniors.

This week, unfortunately, America's seniors will begin to pay the price for that choice that Congress made, that choice that Republican leadership pushed through Congress of tax cuts for the wealthiest Americans over a prescription drug benefit for America's seniors.

Now, Republicans will say, as we will find in the Committee on Energy and Commerce this week as we mark up the prescription drug bill, Republicans will say that they in fact have a prescription drug bill that they are offering in committee. What they will not say is that prescription drug bill is very inadequate for seniors' needs.

Their bill serves three purposes. Number one, it is the launching pad for Medicare privatization. If their prescription drug plan becomes law, it will be the beginning of full scale, turn-it-over-to-the-insurance-companies privatization of Medicare, something clearly seniors in this country and the rest of us in this country do not want.

The second purpose that their legislation will serve, their so-called prescription drug bill offered in committee this week, is it will shift Federal resources away from seniors and into tax cuts. We simply cannot give

hundreds of billions of dollars in tax cuts to the most privileged people in society and still afford to do an adequate prescription drug benefit for seniors.

The third purpose that the Republican bill serves that will be offered in committee this week on prescription drugs is it is what the drug industry wants. The drug industry wrote their legislation.

Congressional Republicans couched these three motives in choice rhetoric. They will argue that seniors should not be forced into a one-size-fits-all prescription drug program, that they deserve, quote-unquote, a "choice" of private plans.

Think about that. What kind of choice is actually desirable when it comes to drug coverage? A drug plan either covers the prescription drugs, or it does not cover the prescription drugs. Disbursing seniors into multiple complicated private plans serves the best interests of the drug industry, to be sure, the best interests of the drug industry, something that my friends on the other side of the aisle are always intent on doing; but it would undercut seniors' collective purchasing power, enabling the drug industry to continue charging their outrageously high prices.

The Republican prescription drug plan, unlike the Democratic plan, the Republican plan does nothing about bringing down drug prices. Why? Because the prescription drug industry wrote their plan.

Their approach chips away at the value of traditional Medicare, setting the stage for Medicare privatization. Both the Bush administration and congressional Republicans have argued that adding a real prescription drug benefit to Medicare is too expensive. That is why their proposal would still leave seniors liable for up to \$3,000 of prescription drug expenses. It is hardly a real prescription drug plan if the senior still could be on the hook for \$3,000.

Retirees contributed to Medicare during their working years; and our current prosperity reflects their hard work over the last 2, 3, 4, 5 decades. Adding real prescription drug coverage to Medicare is an unfulfilled responsibility that this institution, that this Congress, the Members of both parties, must fulfill. Seniors have earned, and they richly deserve, comprehensive health coverage, including modernizing Medicare by including a meaningful prescription drug benefit.

The President and the Congress have a choice when it comes to drug coverage for seniors: we can stand up to the drug industry, devote the necessary resources to a drug benefit, bring prices down for prescription drugs and add a real drug benefit to Medicare; or, or we can cut taxes on the richest, most privileged 1 percent of the people in this country and pass a drug bill that only the prescription drug companies and their friends, their Republican friends in Congress, really want. The answer, Mr. Speaker, is pretty obvious.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12 of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 2 p.m.

Accordingly (at 12 o'clock and 43 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess until 2 p.m.

□ 1400

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mrs. BIGGERT) at 2 p.m.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Daniel P. Coughlin, offered the following prayer:

We bless You and praise You, Lord God, source of all authority on heaven and earth. This weekend in worship service and at family meals, we gathered to thank You and pray for our fathers. As You guide and protect this Nation through the governance of the President and Congress, so You strengthen and direct family life in this great country through parental authority. Shape the men of this House to be models of leadership, but most of all to reflect Your presence in being good fathers. Surround them with love so that they may manifest understanding and seek every opportunity to strengthen character in their children.

Last Wednesday evening members of this Chamber expressed sorrow over the fact that the United States is the world leader in fatherless families. They prayed for responsible fatherhood in themselves and throughout this Nation, encouraging greater involvement of fathers in the lives of their children.

Lord, through deeper love and faithfulness in family relationships, renew lasting values in this society. Deepen belief in Your power, in commitments made, and relationships given us. Provide and protect children always. Free them from fear and all forms of abuse and manipulation now and forever. Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House her approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

Mr. HANSEN. Madam Speaker, pursuant to clause 1, rule I, I demand a vote on agreeing to the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. HANSEN. Madam Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.